

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING MANAGEMENT PANEL: CENTRAL AREA**

**Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 2.00 pm**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Councillors** Hugh-Jones, Nick Childs, Sue Shanks

**Representatives:** Grant Richie, Lesley Campbell, Ododo Dafe, Martin Reid, Geoff Gage, Nick Charles, Carl, Miles Davison, Keely McDonald, Barry Hugues, David Strafford, Theresa Mackey, Simon Bannister

**1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. ACTION MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 2.1 The Chair asked for corrections to be made on items 4.1 and 4.2 related to Barry Hugues update and not Seaside Homes, correction to item 7.1 should read David Stafford.

Subject to corrections made minutes were approved.

- 2.2 Action log update

The meeting heard that the threatening telegraph pole had now been transformed into an attractive garden feature.

Members reported different areas have joined residents' group.

The meeting heard that gas boilers will be phased out and will not be reinstalled in new homes from 2025. The Council are aware some communal areas and properties will be affected by this transition; however, the Council aims to be carbon neutral by 2030.

- 2.3 Points noted that -

- New build projects will not be heated with gas boilers
- Retro fit is more challenging
- The installation of new systems has been piloted
- There are six retro fit in existing homes they will not be feasible in all setting
- Transitioning Council acknowledge Significant challenges
- Preparing by scoping new heating and hot water contracts
- KMT contract ends in 2023, contract will be varied till end of term
- In January 2022 subject to committee approval procurement for contact will be undertaken, and then PNR approval
- The Council will continue their statutory duties and maintain their boilers and the ability to roll out other heating options for tenants

- In November 2021, paper will go to the Procurement Advisory Board, then presented at the Housing Committee in January 202.

2.4 The meeting heard around the boiler in May Flower Square that is constantly broken, members asked whether this could be changed to an electric boiler.

25 In response, officers stated they were aware of issues at May Flower Square and considered estate to be a good case study of challenges faced by the Council. The meeting heard that a temporary plant room had been installed in this block, however, due to problems the plant room had been replaced with a SGN meter. The Council said they were confident that residents will have reliable sources of heating and hot water for their homes during the winter and beyond.

The meeting heard around the Councils concerns about operating electric for heating and hot water for residents that could potentially lead to higher energy bills and fuel poverty. It was noted that the Council are looking for low carbon affordable energy solutions for residents. The Council are not averse to introducing air source heat pumps; however, buildings would need to be ensure well insulated. it was noted that conditioning surveys will be carried out for May Flower Square.

## 2.6 Assets Management Strategy

Members heard that the Assets Management Strategy focuses on how the Council achieve zero carbon efficiency. The Council will engage with residents to see what they want energy sources the Council should invest into. There is £4m in housing budget for retro fit also £3m a year that is spent on boilers, and it's vital to engage with residents to understand what money will be spent on

2.7 Barry Hughes was pleased to hear the Councils position on gas heating for their properties and asked that over 75's could receive support with thermostatic radiators Valls. The Council will work with KMT to ensure all instructions for thermostatic Valls will be user friendly. The Council are scoping a new contract that will provide a holistic service for residents. And the Council are scoping a new contract that will provide a holistic service for residents.

2.8 David Trafford was pleased to hear that the Council had started work with several pilots and asked whether officers could provide some feedback next year around lessons from the pilots. It was envisaged that suppliers of energy would demonstrate heating systems. Hampshire Lodge community room was installed with new a new heating system, however due to the pandemic this room had not been used much, and the Council have not received any feedback.

## 2.9 Ground Source Pumps update:

Members heard that works are underway at Victoria Road new build they block will be fitted with ground source heat pumps, in the future the Council would consider ground source pumps for blocks of flats, although they are aware pumps will not be suitable for all properties if there isn't sufficient land to drill boar hole lops. Furthermore, learnings from Victoria Road will be shared with residents.

2.10 Residents asked for an update on City Clean. The Chair stated that a meeting is now underway, and was not able to give an update, However, the Council are aware of communal stores that need attention.

- 2.11 Councillor Childs asked officers what contingency measures were in place for the refuse industrial dispute for private householder. In response, officers said they would need to see the outcome of negotiations before they could give an update, and sensitive discussions would need to take place with members.
- 2.12 The meeting heard that bin stores are potential fire risk, the Council acknowledged risk, and would report back to members after outcome of meeting.

### **3. POSTIVE COMMUNITY NEWS**

#### **3.1 Empty properties Update:**

There were over 300 empty properties, these have now reduced to 277. The Council have placed more senior management resources to progress this work, including an operation manager also working with Empty Homes to reduce grants capacity of contractors working on empty homes. Also, the Council are directly recruiting contractors. The Council were pleased that empty homes were heading in the right direction and hope to recover their position. The meeting heard due to the pandemic there was a delay in activity with empty homes. However, additionally, two new contractors have recently been recruited, also there is a large-scale recruitment drive will be completed December 2021. Councillors were asked to report to officers on any empty properties in their neighbourhoods they had concerns around to the housing team.

- 3.2 Members heard around the community auction that help was received from City Parks, a wildflower specialist cut back meadows which surrounded new trees. And with support from local volunteer's flower seeds can be raked off. In addition, the wildflowers have grown well, and hope for a good crop next year.

### **4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **4.1 The Chair read the Councils Anti-Social Behaviour Review Policy**

“Following requests from the East and West Area Panels we have started to plan for a review of our ASB working practice and the first stages in scoping this work is to identify key partners in the project.”

#### **4.2 The request was to look into specific areas of this work as follows: –**

- How we respond to reports of ASB.
- What actions we take to address ASB.
- How we report on ASB to Area Panels – number of cases, successfully resolved in the last quarter and the average length of time it takes to resolve.
- Reporting ASB to a single reporting line for all reports of ASB on council estates. Taking into account for different tenures such as secure council tenants, Temporary Accommodation tenants, Housing Association Tenants, Private tenants and other residents.
- Priority moves for victims of ASB .

- 4.3 The format of the review is to be decided. We are considering the option of a task and finish group with residents and other interested parties. Task and Finish Groups usually meet about 3 or 4 times over a couple of months for one hour and a half at a time. Please let the Community Engagement team

know if you are interested. They will provide you with further details as it develops. We aim to have an even spread of people from across the city and across demographics. If we are oversubscribed, we may ask interested people to say a few words about what you would bring to the group and a selection will be made to get a balanced group with a diverse set of experiences".